

Public Access to Campaign Spending Reports

Contributions to Candidates and Political Committees

No person may make contributions to a state legislative candidate that exceed \$800 per election in which the candidate's name is on the ballot. Contributions to state executive candidates may not exceed \$1,600 in the primary and \$1,600 in the general election. A person may give unlimited funds to the exempt activities account of a political party, to ballot issue committees, or to other political committees. During the 21 days before the general election, however, a person may contribute no more than \$5,000 to a local or judicial office candidate, political party, or other political committee. Contributions from corporations, unions, businesses, associations, and similar organizations are permitted, subject to limits and other restrictions.

Registration and Reporting by Candidates and Political Committees

No later than two weeks after an individual becomes a candidate or a political committee is organized, a campaign finance registration statement must be filed with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) and the county elections department. (Committees that form within three weeks of the election must register within three business days.) The candidate or committee treasurer is also required to report periodically the source and amount of campaign contributions over \$25 and to list campaign expenditures. The occupation and employer of individuals giving more than \$100 to a campaign must also be identified.

These reports may be inspected and copied at the PDC's Olympia office, the county elections department in the county where the candidate lives, and on the Internet (www.pdc.wa.gov). Every candidate and political committee participating in the election must make their campaign books and records available for public inspection, by

appointment, during the eight days before the election except Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. Use the contact information provided on the campaign registration to make an appointment.

Independent Campaign Expenditures

Anyone making expenditures totaling \$100 or more in support of or in opposition to a state or local candidate or ballot measure (not including contributions made to a candidate or political committee) must file a report with the PDC and their county elections department within five days. Forms are available from the PDC and the county elections department, or can be downloaded from the PDC website. Finally, all political advertising must identify the person paying for the ad and may be required to include other information. Expenditures for independently sponsored political advertisements that cost \$1,000 or more and appear during the last three weeks before an election must be reported to the PDC within 24 hours of when the ad is first presented to the public. Sponsors of electioneering communications must electronically report expenditures within 24 hours of the communication being presented to the public. More information about independent ads and electioneering communications is available from the PDC.

Federal Campaigns

Contributions to U.S. Senate and House of Representatives candidates are regulated by federal law. An individual may contribute a maximum of \$2,300 in the primary and \$2,300 in the general election to each candidate for U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative. Corporations and unions are prohibited from contributing from their general treasury funds to federal campaigns. Contributions may be made from separate segregated funds (also called political action committees or PACs). Copies of the federal campaign finance reports are available from the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Need More Information?

Contact the Public Disclosure Commission at 711 Capitol Way, Room 206, PO Box 40908, Olympia, WA 98504-0908, or by phone (360) 753-1111, email pdc@pdc.wa.gov, or www.pdc.wa.gov. For federal campaigns, contact the Federal Election Commission by phone at (202) 694-1100, toll-free (800) 424-9530, TDD/TTY (202) 219-3336, or visit www.fec.gov.
